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WE are glad to report that the prospects for the N.C.U. Festival at the Crystal Palace on Saturday, June 15, are very promising. The committee have issued more books this year than in any previous year, but the applications coming in too late have been more numerous than ever. As may be expected, some choirs have dropped out, but many new choirs have joined the Union. While regretting the absence of old friends, perhaps the good influence of the Union will be more far reaching by the constant accession of fresh choirs.

As we have before intimated, steps are being taken to form a band to take part on June 15. Four rehearsals will be held in the hall of the Sunday School Union, 56, Old Bailey, on Thursdays, May 9, 16, 23, and 30 at 7 p.m. Competent players, who are willing to give their services, are requested to communicate *at once* with the hon. sec., Mr. T. R. Croger, 114, Wood-street, E.C. Besides playing accompaniments, the orchestra will play several selections.

Rehearsals are now being arranged at various centres. A list of these fixtures will shortly be sent to all the choirs taking part in the Festival. It is hoped they will then arrange to attend one of them.

In reference to our article, "Open the Churches," which appeared in our last issue, the *Methodist Times* says:—"THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL suggests that one night a week might, at any rate, be devoted to music. Organ recitals, solos, and choruses, would surely prove attractive. This would specially be the case in the destitute and less privileged quarters. Those who have observed the pathetic interest which the poor take even in a barrel-organ will realise how much happiness might be brought to them if it were possible to have a comfortable, well-lighted, well-warmed church, in which once a week the poor might be cheered and elevated with instrumental and vocal music. There is, of course, the question of the cost; but that could be met either by the special contributions of those interested in the experiment, or otherwise by collections."

A correspondent writes: "I wish to thank you for the help your journal has been to me in my choir work here. As an old cathedral boy and church organist, I was at first rather at sea, but your paper has been of great use to me."

The writer goes on thus: "I hope you will pardon me for venturing to differ with the writer of the notice about the service at Roupell Park Chapel. In it he says: 'We have always found it best for the organist to play the treble note for half a second before playing the full chord.' In my opinion it destroys all attack, and is a means by which the choir lose confidence in themselves." We welcome all criticism, and therefore thank our friend for his remark. We are, however, strongly of opinion, formed after many years of experience, that to sound the treble note for a second only before each verse is distinctly favourable to a good attack. We shall be glad to hear what any of our readers have to say on this matter, as it is one of general interest.

Voluntary Choirs and the Training of them.

CHOIR-TRAINING is a difficult matter, as many a young organist finds to his cost. At the outset of his career he enters upon the task with enthusiasm and keen enjoyment, thinking it an easy and pleasant business. But soon he is aware of "rocks ahead," often just where he least expected them and he is a fortunate man, if he escapes a wiser—without being a sadder man. Enthusiasm carries a man through a great deal, but it is likely to wane unless a man has an endless supply of energy, good nerves, and a most amiable temper.

With a voluntary choir the first difficulty is not to train, but to get it to train. All organists, with such a choir, frequently find half empty benches both at the services and choir practices. In unfavourable weather many of the ladies—and somehow the ladies of one's choir seem always to be having colds, sore throats, etc.—will not venture out, and even the men, without any such excuse, prefer their firesides. Then on

special occasions when one wants a good choir for extra music, such as at Christmas or Easter, the leading soprano is away to spend the Christmas holidays, or the only decent tenor is off with his family to the seaside from Thursday to Easter Tuesday. In the summer months it becomes even worse, for with the fine light evenings few care to attend the practices, and then so many are away for holidays at the same time that the best thing the organist can do is to run away also, although it is hard for his deputy to be left in such a plight.

In many churches the plan is adopted of holding the choir practices after the week-night service, which has its advantages and disadvantages. It necessitates giving up only one evening in the week, and also the church in the winter is warmer and more comfortable than on any other evening. The choir members are generally in some choral society, which takes one evening at least; they are frequent concert-goers, as well as performers at concerts, and it is a consideration to kill two birds with one stone.

It is frequently remarked by a *paterfamilias* that his grown-up sons and daughters are out every evening in the week, and that the only time he is at home the house is empty. When the *paterfamilias* is himself the culprit, the family grumble that they never see him as he is out all day and again off somewhere every evening.

We will suppose the choir to have mustered in fair numbers. Now difficulties of another sort begin. The organ is frequently so situated that the organist's back is turned to his choir; and if he plays himself, he has a difficulty in making himself heard when addressing the choir as well as feeling very uncomfortable talking half over his shoulder. It is not easy, in addition, to hear the choir distinctly. It is a good plan to use the organ as little as possible under these circumstances, but, then, one is continually running to the instrument to start the choir afresh, for in learning new music, there will be frequent stops, breakdowns, wrong notes, and fall in pitch. To obviate this difficulty, the organist sometimes gets a pupil to accompany at the practices, which is a good plan provided the pupil is capable. But if he frequently makes mistakes, if he is not a good timist, or does not follow carefully the beat of the organist, who, for the time being, conducts, he does more harm than good. In some churches the choirmaster and the organist are two separate persons. As a rule, the plan does not work well. The organist is—or ought to be—a well-trained musician, and has not much respect for the choirmaster, who is possibly an amateur, with a fair voice, but very little knowledge of music. Their ideas are very different, and they will disagree on matters of *tempo*, expression, etc., so that the organist will sit at his instrument fuming and inwardly calling the choirmaster all sorts of names, especially when he makes such blunders as men who have not thoroughly studied music are bound to make. Moreover, although the choirmaster may have his way at the practices, the organist has the advantage on the Sunday when he can practically take the music at whatever time he pleases, and register so as to suit his own ideas. I do

not say he *would* do this, but it is in his power, and then comes the turn of the choirmaster to fume. The one-man system is by far the best.

If possible, the organist should sit at a harmonium or pianoforte facing the choir, so that he can talk to them without any inconvenience, can play with one hand sometimes, beating time with the other, or can stop playing and readily continue after an interval. Sometimes the practices are more conveniently held in the schoolroom or church parlour, where there is a pianoforte and where there is less space for the voices to fill.

Now as regards the members of the choir. The organist, obtaining an appointment, is met with difficulties at the outset. He finds a choir of a sort already formed. Probably half the members have no business in the seats at all; some being silent members and useless, others worse than useless—a great nuisance. He often finds one or two ladies not by any means young, with worn-out voices, who should be sitting in their pews amongst the congregation; or some particular soprano with a powerful voice, who sings frightfully out of tune, and drags down the whole choir with her; or a tenor with a hard, rasping voice, who would be heard amongst a score of tenors; and others who have been probably asked by the minister to help, who make no sound at all, and serve only as ornaments to fill up the benches. What is the poor organist to do under these circumstances? If he intends having good singing, and does not intend having his ears continually annoyed, he must get rid of these members at all cost. He should do it fearlessly at once, and without offence if he possibly can. It is his only chance, for after holding the appointment for some time, after he has become known to the members of the choir and the church generally, it is an almost impossible task. There will be more offence taken, his actions will be criticised much more harshly, he will be credited with favouritism, with acting from personal motives, with being influenced by his likes or dislikes for different members, he will make so many enemies that it will be a wonder if they do not turn the tables and route him out before long. A man coming fresh, without knowing his choir personally, cannot be accused of acting from any other motive than the improvement of the singing, and all right-minded people in the congregation as well as in the choir will approve and uphold him, even if they or their friends are somewhat hurt for the moment. The congregation know as well as the organist what a terrible nuisance Mr. —, the tenor, is, or Miss —, the soprano; they continually talk amongst themselves of their wretched voices, and are heartily glad when some one has the courage to ask them to retire. It should be done openly and in a straightforward manner. I once knew an organist troubled with a most objectionable voice, but unfortunately allowed the lady possessing it to retain her seat. Some interfering member of the congregation, seeing the organist would not take the initiative, wrote her an anonymous letter, informing her of what people thought of her voice, and so on. The organist got the credit of writing the letter, and the things that lady and her family said

about the organist were enough to make one's hair stand on end. She left the choir, and showed the letter openly to everybody she met as written by the organist, who was quite innocent, and knew nothing about it at the time. He rather wondered at his good fortune in having been rid of those strident tones without any effort on his own part.

Possibly some of these objectionable members have been in the choir for a considerable time, and in a sort of pathetic manner say it is very hard to have to give up their seats after having sat in them for so many years. A lady even went so far as to admit she had sat in her particular seat for twenty-four years. After such service the best voice must be going, and every member of a choir should be willing to retire in favour of younger members, before their voices are entirely gone, and the reputation they once had as good singers gone with them. The same argument of long possession is a favourite one if the organist wishes for any reason to alter the places. Especially when there is any antiphonal singing, it is often necessary for a proper balance to alter the seats of different members. Rather than move into other seats the ladies will frequently leave the choir. The men, I must own, are not so touchy on this score; it seems a peculiarity of the gentle sex to get attached to a particular seat and refuse to be comforted in any other. Naturally friends like to sit together, and the organist should not ignore such matters when arranging the choir-seats. It is right that each member should have a particular seat, or there would be endless disagreements, disputings who should move up, who should have the corner seat, etc., *ad infinitum*. Choir-singers should be willing to sit where the organist judges advisable in order to obtain the best effect.

Troublesome members are sometimes met with, who have an opinion on every matter, and who will persist in ventilating the same in public. Such members must be shown their proper place at once. The choir-practice is *not* a debate; if any members have suggestions or criticisms to make, the organist will be very glad to hear them privately and give them due consideration *after* the practice, but during the practice his word must be law. Unless he keeps a strict hold over his choir in regard to such matters, his authority, and all respect for him as a choir-master, will soon have vanished. The offending member is often a gentleman who has been training the choir during a temporary vacancy between the retirement and appointment of organist. The minister has asked him to take the choir-practices with the help of a member of the congregation at the organ. When the new organist is appointed, and the worthy amateur again finds himself among the tenors or basses, he finds it difficult to keep from expressing his opinions, especially if they happen to be opposed to those of the newcomer. Frequently, I am sorry to say, it is a lady who takes it upon herself to correct (?) or advise the organist; some interfering soprano, probably of the "woman's rights" species, whose mouth must be closed speedily. It is difficult to deal with these people. On the first occasion of such interference, the organist must explain clearly and decidedly that he intends to have no discussions during

the practices, but will be pleased to listen to anything a member may wish to say privately. This will generally suffice; but if not, one must be severe and refer his choir to the choir-list in order to see if anything is said about a *choir-mistress*. It may not be very polite, and may cause offence, but something must be done to put a stop to what is great impertinence and deserving of severe rebuke.

The organist has another serious difficulty to face. A is offended because B is asked to sing the solo in an anthem and stays away. A's friends are also indignant, and much unpleasantness and many unkind remarks result. Singers as a rule are touchy, and each prone to consider himself better than his neighbour. Occasionally the offended member is one whom nobody else would have dreamt of asking to sing a solo, or would have had a suspicion that that member expected to be asked. The difficulty may be met by having one acknowledged leader of each part—if possible *paid* members—who should be proficient and capable of singing solos well. If there is no such understood arrangement, and any member may expect to be asked, nobody is satisfied, and discord reigns supreme.

Voluntary choirs are extremely unsatisfactory for the above reasons, as well as others, such as lack of ability, faulty voice-production, bad pronunciation, etc.; matters which I hope to touch upon with the editor's permission on some future occasion. When churches can afford it, there should be a certain proportion of paid members, who are always present, and to be depended upon, no matter what weather, or what other attractions there may be. They will form a nucleus at all events, and the organist will not find himself left on certain Sundays or at the choir-practices with possibly not a single alto, or with only one indifferent tenor.

B. Mus.

AN OLD SCOTCH PRECENTOR.—We come across various stories now and again of the humours and style of old Scotch precentors, and within these few years there has been great changes with regard to leaders of psalmody. A notable precentor was Alexander Prain, who officiated in School Wynd U.P. Church, Dundee, in George Gilfillan's time. In Prain's early time it was customary for the leader of Psalmody to wear a gown when occupying the "Letterin," and possibly "Sandy Prain was about the last to "wear silk" on the Sunday. To have seen Gilfillan going through the church followed by Prain was a sight never to be forgotten. Both were men of towering stature, and when robed in their gowns they had a most imposing appearance. Prain's singing powers were not, however, of the highest order, but the people, who were then, perhaps, not so fastidious, were pleased. Prain's appearance in the desk when in the performance of his duty was peculiar. His hair was straight and was parted in the middle, and, like Gilfillan, he had a very ruddy countenance. When singing he opened his mouth in such a way as to make it doubtful sometimes as to whether he was laughing or crying. His eyes, too, were somewhat prominent, and if any of the congregation happened to get a little ahead in the time he turned those eyes upon them with such a look as to make them lower their tone and their time during that service at least. Verily the precentor was an important Church functionary in those days, and cannot be compared with the modern organist.



Music at Brixton Independent Church.

BRIXTON is one of the favourite residential districts in the south of London, and may be considered one of the busiest and most important parts of the metropolis outside of the City proper.

One of the largest and most noted places of worship in the neighbourhood is certainly Brixton Independent Church. For many years it has been a centre of much religious activity, and Congregational churches throughout the country have always been greatly interested in it owing to the high standing of its ministers. It is only necessary to mention the name of Baldwin Brown to awaken feelings of joy and thankfulness in many hearts. It was here that for years he broke the Bread of Life with so much power and earnestness as to make his influence felt far and wide. He did much to mould the congregation into a company of broad-minded, earnest truthseekers. Many a year must elapse before his memory and influence fade away. His successor, Dr. Stevenson, although pastor for a comparatively short time only, was a man of high intellectual ability and considerable pulpit power. He was followed by the present pastor, the Rev. Bernard J. Snell, M.A., B.Sc., a man of rare gifts, and in every way fully capable of maintaining the traditions of the church. Though much younger than his two predecessors, he has already made an excellent reputation, and has endeared himself in the hearts of his people. That he is the right man in the right place there can be no manner of doubt. The spacious church is invariably full, and usually on Sunday evening it is so crowded that many have

to be turned away from the doors. Nearly a hundred persons are now waiting to take seats as vacancies may occur. Mr. Snell is most unconventional, and his service is anything but of the ordinary type. Like a wise man he knows what satisfies the spiritual wants of the people, and regardless of custom and prejudice he sees that these wants are supplied. From what follows it will be seen that the order of service is very varied and altogether interesting. Further expansions will probably be adopted as may be found expedient.

We visited the church on a cold foggy Sunday evening early in March. On such a night we did not expect to see a large congregation; but arriving ten minutes or so before the time for commencement of service, we were surprised to find the pews already well filled. Before Mr. Snell entered the pulpit every seat was occupied, and many were standing in the aisle waiting for accommodation.

The organ—a sweet-toned instrument by Willis—is placed in the apse at the back of the pulpit, and the choir, consisting of about forty-five members, are seated on either side of the pulpit.

Mr. Alfred Rhodes, whose likeness we give, has held the post of organist for twenty-three years, and during the whole of that lengthy period he has served the church faithfully and well. He is a very capable player, and has a good teaching connexion in Brixton. Latterly he has devoted himself to literary work, and is now bringing out a book "The Curiosities of the Keyboard and the Staff," which promises to have a large sale. He has lectured on the same subject with much acceptance before various institutions, his researches proving of much interest to many well-known musicians. Pressure of work has told somewhat on his health, and he has come to feel the necessity of curtailing his engagements. He has therefore resigned his position as organist, but occupies the organ stool till a successor is appointed. We were very glad to hear that Mr. Rhodes was held in such esteem that the deacons have given him a pension of £40 a year for life. Though he has served the church so long, it is not every body of deacons who would have acted so kindly and generously. He gives up his position with every feeling of goodwill on all hands, and the best wishes of the church and congregation will follow him.

A few years ago Mr. Rhodes, feeling the necessity of some assistance in the management of the choir, requested Mr. Lawrence Brient to render help in that direction. This duty he undertook and has carried out very efficiently. This dual control does not always answer, but in this instance it has worked smoothly, and we believe with satisfaction to all parties.

But to return to a description of the service. The opening voluntary was the Larghetto movement from Beethoven's Second Symphony, which Mr. Rhodes played with excellent taste. An Introit, "We bow in prayer," followed, and this was well sung by the whole congregation. "Scripture Sentences, Collects and Lord's Prayer," came next. "Amen" was sung after the Collects, and the Lord's Prayer was sung to a simple setting strongly suggestive of Langdon's Chant made to fit. It

was expressively rendered, however, though we were not impressed with the beauty of the music. The first hymn was "Saviour, blessed Saviour" (*Edina*). With so large a congregation we expected more vigour in this. The people did not seem to warm up to it. After a Scripture lesson part of Isaiah lv. (No. 135), was chanted to Turlé in D. This went fairly well; a point of difficulty was the comma after "Ho," in verse 1, thus:—

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come . ye | to the | waters.

Speaking generally, no doubt all commas should be observed, but where they come as in this instance, it gives a choppy effect. So long as the comma is printed, it must be observed, but in a future edition of the Congregational Church Hymnal (the book in use at Brixton), it would be well to eliminate all such commas. After the chant came the "Commandments of Jesus Christ" as follows, the responses being devotionally sung by the choir:—

1.—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

Response—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

2.—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Response—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

3.—Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Response—Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these Thy laws in our hearts, we beseech Thee.

The anthem followed, then a prayer, and afterwards the well-known hymn, "Come unto Me, ye weary," to Dykes' fine tune. The people sang better in this, but we venture to think a little more support from the organ would have been an improvement. Such a large congregation needs support and guidance.

Mr. Snell's sermon was based on Ephesians iii. 17. It was a practical, eloquent, and very earnest discourse. Towards the close he said that for the last quarter of an hour he had put aside his manuscript and had been saying what he had no thought of saying when he began. Most of his congregation probably thought that this was the best part of the sermon. The last hymn was "I heard the voice of Jesus say," which was sung heartily. The last four lines of each verse were appropriately taken faster than the first four lines, Mr. Rhodes' staccato pedal notes clearly indicating the change to the people. "Amen" was sung after the Benediction, and Mr. Rhodes played the people out with Handel's "Let their celestial concerts all unite." So ended a service which forcibly struck us might be advantageously introduced into many of our churches. There was so much in which the people could audibly join; nothing was long and everything was bright; a sleepy worshipper would be an impossibility.

The morning service is very much of the same character, with the addition of the General Thanksgiving and Confession.

Every Sunday a four-page leaflet is distributed amongst the congregation, giving the order of service with the numbers of hymns, chants, etc., and the announcements of engagements for the week.

As these engagements usually run to about thirty, it will be gathered that there is much activity in the church.

In connection with the church there is a flourishing musical society—"The Brixton Musical Society"—which Mr. Briant founded a few years ago, and which he conducts. There are about 100 members and a band of thirty performers. They have performed almost all the standard oratorios with much success. On the Sunday evening after Christmas Day the Society gave a performance of the *Messiah* in the church, with orchestral accompaniments, Mr. Snell giving a short and suitable address.

Few, if any, churches in London are in a more flourishing state than Brixton Independent Church. Success attends every department of the work, and "nothing succeeds like success." May this happy and prosperous state of affairs long continue.

Passing Notes.

THE lady who last year upset the choir of Chester Cathedral by the boisterous character of her musical devotions, has now a rival in London. It was Bassanio's complaint against Gratiano that he was "too rude and bold of voice," but the complaint was made before Gratiano had promised to "sigh and say Amen." With the London lady it has been the other way about. It is precisely because of her rudeness and boldness of voice in the saying of her "Amen" that Miss Amelia Payne has had to pay a fine of forty shillings, and find some one who will be responsible for the repression of her musical ardour. Payne by name, her praises were pain too. Not that she would admit the soft impeachment; such "miserable offenders" never do. Miss Payne told the magistrate that she went to church to please her Maker, not His creatures called men; and when the unfeeling magistrate asked her to conceive the condition of things if everybody were to act in like manner, she blandly replied: "Then there would be more worship." This is the mistaken notion of a good many worthy people whose greatest offence is that they are unconscious of offence. While they foolishly flatter themselves that they are pleasing their Maker, they are sublimely indifferent to the fact that they are causing their fellow-worshippers the keenest torture. In principle it may be right enough that the raven should praise God in his own way, but in practice the raven should really have some consideration for the lark. The fortunate thing in cases like that of Miss Payne is, that magistrates have power to abate the nuisance and are not unwilling to exercise it.

In one of the American journals they are discussing the question of how a fugue is best registered on the average organ. It is an exceedingly interesting question, but the answer to it is not easily given, for even different fugues require different treatment. One in the *Alla Breve* style must be "stopped" in a different manner to another more florid in character. It is difficult, therefore, to lay down precise rules. There can be little doubt that it is safe to avoid using 16-foot

registers when playing such works, as well as the mixtures, and even the reeds, except in passages marked *ff*. All the 8-foot registers coupled, with part of the 4-foot stops, and the occasional employment of a light reed like the oboe, and only here and there the full organ; these simple and general rules can be pretty well applied to the performance of all fugues and pieces of an elaborate contrapuntal character. At least, by adhering to these rules one will err on the safe side and not risk his reputation for good taste and judgment. In this connection I note that in a new French work on Bach the author asserts that Bach's "organo pleno"—the only term which the composer has used as an indication of expression—did not comprise the manual reeds. In Bach's time we are told that it was something like an article of faith that a reed stop should not be combined with a flute on the manuals, though it might be added on the pedals. The author of the work to which I refer says that the one exception to this rule was in the last verse of the hymn, when the addition of the manual reed was justified by the necessity of awaking the dormant priest! Did the priests, then, show a tendency to sleep, as well as the people?

Herr Sauer's silent protest against the impertinent tinkling of the muffin-bell has brought us a good deal of comment upon what may be called the innocent interruptions that sometimes mar our concert performances. I say innocent, for it would be wrong to suppose that the muffin man is in league against Beethoven, or that the clock in the neighbouring church spire has a rooted aversion to Liszt. The annoyance is, however, none the less of an annoyance that the cause of it is not actuated by *malice prepense*. One critic, I observe, regards the muffin-bell incident as "most amusing"; such little surprises, in his opinion, tend to agreeably vary the monotony of existence. That may be so with some of the listeners, but I do not believe that the artist exists who would find enjoyment in these "surprises." We have had recalled for us in illustration the "sad case" of a worthy vocalist who one hot afternoon was singing in a provincial hall the old-fashioned song, "Who shall be fairest?" All the windows were open, the scanty audience was somnolent, and the singer was discouraged to start with. But he had barely finished, in his best style, the line, "Who shall be fairest?" when, before he had time to continue, a voice in the street replied with odious distinctness, "Ten-a-penny walnuts." The stereotyped chant of the walnut man happened in a feeble and fantastic way to carry on the air. This was *too* much; the disgusted vocalist wheeled about on the platform and was out of the hall within five minutes. Organists most frequently suffer from this kind of thing. Indeed, in a recent number of the *Musical Standard* an instance is recorded where the officiating clergyman had to stop the service until an organ-grinder outside could be removed to a safe distance. Tallis' Responses and "Strolling round the Town" can hardly be expected to go well together.

Is the bouquet of the lady vocalist doomed? The question can hardly be regarded as frivolous when emi-

nent vocalists and throat specialists have begun to talk seriously of the injurious effect of flowers on the voice. Some celebrated teachers, it is said, even caution their pupils against having them in their dressing rooms. Madame Christine Nilsson mentions the fact of an eminent lady singer who, after burying her nose in a wreath of tuberose, went on the stage to find that she could not raise a note. The vocal chords had been temporarily paralysed. A doctor was called, the flowers were thrown out of the window, and, the singer, after her throat had been treated, was able to sing later in the evening. Miss Emma Calvé also upholds Nilsson's opinion. The tuberose she finds especially injurious, and the only flowers she allows in her apartments are roses and violets. Upon entering a room where lilies are, she always wants to throw the windows open. Personally, she can exempt the violet from the charge of injury; but it is curious to find that other singers declare against the "dim" little blossom—to use Shakespeare's happy epithet—in the most emphatic manner. The whole thing is no doubt considerably exaggerated, just as are the grandmotherly warnings of our old friend the *Lancet*. But if there is anything in the notion it is well that jealous prima-donnas should know of it. It might be easy to upset the "star" of the company by presenting her with a bouquet of lilies and tuberose.

Apropos of our organ-blower stories in last issue, a courteous correspondent reminds me of an addition to the number in Dr. Spark's "Musical Reminiscences." The Doctor had promised on one occasion to give an organ recital for a charity at a village in the East Riding. When he arrived at the church, the venerable rector, taking him into a quiet corner, said in an anxious tone: "My dear Doctor, it is really very good of you to come and help us in our little village. But there is one thing I want to ascertain before you begin: *have you brought your own blower?*" Dr. Spark tells further that he once had a half-witted character of a blower, who would put his head round the corner of the instrument before the recital began, and astonish him by remarking: "It's all right, Doctor, I'm here, and there's sure to be a good performance between us." It is the "*We* did it" again, you see!

SLEAFORD NONCONFORMIST CHORAL UNION.—The members of the Sleaford Nonconformist Choral Union scored a brilliant success on March 28th, when a popular concert, given under the auspices of their society, was patronized by a large, appreciative, and highly enthusiastic audience. Gaul's sacred cantata, *The Holy City*, was the *pièce-de-resistance* of the evening. When it is borne in mind that the members of the society are minus any professional assistance in their training, the concert reflected the highest possible credit upon their talented conductor, Mr. J. H. Dodson, as well as upon the ladies and gentlemen of the chorus, who acquitted themselves admirably. The soloists were Miss Hettie Creasey (Sleaford), soprano; Miss Florence Bourne (Birmingham), contralto; Mr. Chas. Blagbro (Bradford), tenor; and Mr. J. Lycett (Sheffield), bass, all of whom sang exceedingly well. The second part of the programme was miscellaneous. An orchestra took part in the proceedings, their efforts adding considerably to the success of the concert.

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ORGAN.

f *Senza Ped.* *Red.* *f con spirito*

Sa - viour, blessed Sa - viour,

cresc. e pesante *ff*

list - en whilst we sing, Hearts and voi - ces rais - ing prais - es to our

mf King. All we have to of - fer; All we hope to

mf

* The Music may be adapted to "Forward be our watchword!"
E. 51 M.

Printed by C.G. Röder, Leipzig.

be; Bo - dy, soul, and spir - it, all we yield to

ff
Thee. Sa - viour, bles - sed Sa - viour, list - en whilst we

ff
sing, Hearts and voi - ces rais - ing prais - es to our

King.

p
Near - er, ev - er near - er, Christ, we draw to Thee.....

dim.
Deep in a - do - ra - tion Bend - ing low the knee.....
dim.

p
Thou for our re - demp - tion cam'st on earth to die;.....

cresc.
Thou, that we night fol - low, hast gone up on high.
cresc.

ff
Sa - viour, blessed Sa - - viour, list - en whilst we sing.
ff

Hearts and voi - ces rais - ing prais - es to our King.

Brighter still and

bright - er glows the western sun, Shed - ding all its gladness o'er our

work that's done; Time will soon be ov - er, toil and sor - row

past; May we, blessed Saviour, find a rest at last.

ff

Saviour, blessed Sa - vour, list-en whilst we sing, Hearts and voi-ces

ff

rais - ing prais-es to our King.

On - ward, ev - er on - ward, journeying o'er the

f

road. Worn by saints be - fore us, journeying on to God;

Leaving all be - hind us, may we hast-en on, Backward nev-er

look-ing till the prize is won. Saviour, blessed Sa - viour,

list - en whilst we sing, Hearts and voi - ces rais - - ing

prais-es to our King. A - - - men.

rallentando *Largo.*

rallentando Trombe *Largo.*

The First Kiss: An Episode.

LITTLE JIMMY SIMPKINS was undoubtedly a favourite with the ladies. His name was *not* Jimmy, of course; nor was it James; but on his first appearance as organist at Bethesda Independent Chapel, one of the frivolous young ladies in the choir said to her neighbour, in what was meant to be a whisper, but was in fact perfectly audible: "Oh, I say, Bella; *what a little Jimmy!*" From that time forward Horatio Simpkins was known in that place by the name of "little Jimmy"—that and no other.

Perhaps it was because he was so little that he was a favourite with the ladies. A leisurely walk down the Row on a fine morning in the season will assure anybody who takes the trouble to investigate the matter, that ladies have a great partiality for *little* dogs, and that, as a rule, the taller the lady the smaller the dog. It must have been on some such psychological principle that the ladies took such a violent fancy for little Jimmy. He was short, stumpy, and woolly, his hair clustering in profusion of curls upon his small round head. Some of the male members of the choir called him a cur; one old lady whom he happened to offend called him an impudent young monkey; but the attitude of the majority of ladies towards him was just that of a lady to her lap-dog. And that means, as anybody will tell you, that he was spoiled. He was quite young, a very unlicked young cub, with small brains and no manners, and nothing to recommend him but a pretty skill with his fingers, and a cheerful disposition which was ever bubbling over in practical jokes and hearty laughter, and which no amount of criticism, no frownings of solemn deacons, nothing in the world, was able to quell.

Now it happened that the senior deacon of Bethesda Chapel had a remarkably pretty daughter, whom any young man in the church would have died to get a smile from. The young lady was very chary of her smiles. Though her age was but seventeen, she comported herself with such dignity that the young men who were the most eager for her favour were the most timid in approaching her. Little Jimmy was not slow to find this out. He came to church one morning chuckling with delight. "What do you think?" he said to one of the young ladies. "I was going along the Abbey Road yesterday, and there was Lydia Marston, looking in at the shops. About a dozen yards behind was Tom Jackson, following her like a shadow, stopping when she stopped and going on when she went on, and blushing like a chrysanthemum—he! he! ha! ha! He was dying to speak to her—ha! ha!—but he couldn't pluck up the courage—ho! ho! He waited outside Baker's half an hour, and then when she came out—ha! ha!—he looked the other way. I was watching him all the time, and wasn't he mad when I went up to him and asked him how much longer he would wait to pop the question!"

"You are a shocking man, Jimmy," said the young lady. "But aren't you a little afraid of Lydia yourself?"

"Me? Afraid? Ha! ha! I'll show you if I'm afraid. Just you wait a bit."

It was with not a little consternation that, a week later, people saw Jimmy walking to church with Lydia (accompanied by her mamma, it is true), who was talking and smiling with the ease of old acquaintance.

"What infernal cheek!" muttered Tom Jackson, who was walking a little in their rear on the other side of the way.

The acquaintance thus boldly inaugurated by little Jimmy progressed apace. He held his little nose higher than ever, and looked with such complacent pity and condescension on his less happy rivals that they were all burning with rage against him. He might frequently be seen walking to and from church with the fair Lydia, and the sight was particularly infuriating to Tom Jackson, because the top of little Jimmy's top hat barely reached the young lady's ear. "The little cur!" he muttered.

There came a day when Jimmy gave a grand concert in the hall adjoining the chapel. On the programme was a song entitled "The First Kiss," written and composed by Jimmy himself, and respectfully dedicated to Miss Lydia Marston. Nobody knew this latter fact but the young lady herself, for her father was a man of such dignity and importance that not even Jimmy would have dared to put his dedication in print. But Lydia, in spite of her dignity, had a spice of sentimentality in her composition, and when the young organist showed her his words and music (which were in truth of very poor quality), she accepted his dedication with enthusiasm, and promised to sing the song at his concert.

The rest of the story must be told in the words of Miss Rebecca Carroll, as she delivered them at the meeting of the ladies' working party, of which she was the organiser. Miss Rebecca was a severe and sexagenarian spinster, who wore curls on either side of her face, and was on bad terms with little Jimmy.

"I never heard of such a thing," said Miss Carroll. "I would never have believed it of Lydia. I should not be surprised at anything Mr. Simpkins did, but Lydia—I assure you, I could hardly believe my own eyes. After the concert—you know I did not go to the concert; I would not gratify Mr. Simpkins by giving him *my* patronage; I spent the evening reading tracts to old Mrs. Rundall [the chapel-keeper's wife], who was ill with a quinsy—after the concert, I say, I was going down the path to go home, when all of a sudden—it was dark, you know, only there was a full moon and I could see without my spectacles; I was going down the path from the chapel door when I heard footsteps behind me. My heart jumped into my mouth; you all know how timid I am; the least sound makes me jump, and I really thought a robber was after me, so I stepped aside behind the tall yew tree that stands at the gate, to be out of harm's way. And what do you think I saw? You will never believe me, but I assure you it is perfectly true. I saw Mr. Simpkins coming along with Lydia Marston, and actually—*isn't it dreadful?*—his arm was round her waist. I could have screamed at his impudence, and I could have shaken Lydia for allowing it. But that was not the worst. As they came to the gate, he put his arm round—*actually*, round her

neck, and—kissed her. 'The first kiss,' I heard him say. First indeed! Not *his* first by a long way, I know. Then they parted, and when I was sure all was safe I went home. My nerves were quite upset, and I could not sleep for thinking what I ought to do. But I made it a matter of prayer whether I should tell her father, and in the morning I wrote him a letter. I am sure I don't know what the young people are coming to."

Little Jimmy Simpkins ceased to be organist of Bethesda Chapel a month after his concert. His song is published, but without the dedication. Lydia Marston is now married, but not to little Jimmy.

A WELSH EISTEDDFOD.

THE Eisteddfod is a prominent institution in Wales. The Welsh revel in these friendly competitions, and nowhere can such enthusiasm and keen interest be witnessed as when "the chief choral competition of an important Eisteddfod" takes place.

One of the largest gatherings of this kind in Wales this year was held in Mountain Ash, near Cardiff, on Easter Monday. I was invited to act as one of the adjudicators on the occasion. This Eisteddfod was promoted for the benefit of the local cottage hospital; but when I found that a prize of £100 was offered for the best rendering of a chorus, £30 for a male voice piece, £10 for a juvenile choir contest, £15 for a brass band competition, with £10 as second prize, £15 for drum and fife band competition, to say nothing of innumerable guineas for smaller contests, bringing the grand total up to about £225, I began to wonder where the "benefit" would come in. On arriving at the scene of battle, however, my mind was soon put to rest on this point, for the attendance ran up to about 12,000 people, all of whom paid at least one shilling, some paying four shillings extra for reserved seats. The financial result will probably mean a balance of nearly £400 being handed to the hospital.

As showing the eagerness to enter the fray, I may say that I was appalled on being told my first duty would be to hear privately forty-three players render Mozart's "Rondo in D," and select three of them to compete before the audience. Fortunately only about twenty-eight turned up; but to hear that little lot was no joke. Suffice to say that three of us were kept adjudicating, sometimes together and sometimes separately, from 10 a.m. to about 8 p.m., with only a few minutes rest.

The choral competitions were most exciting. The £100 prize was given for the best rendering of Dr. Parry's "Put off, O Jerusalem" (*Judith*). The singing was very fine and very little fault could be found with it. Three choirs entered for this. The male voice competition attracted seven choirs, all of them of excellent quality. Better singing I never heard anywhere. The fever heat of excitement amongst the singers and audience at the close, while I gave the adjudication, was almost overpowering.

To hear such magnificent singing, to witness the genuine enthusiasm that pervaded the proceedings, and to see the interest the people had in the competitions was soul-stirring. It did me good to be present.

Not the least affecting part of the day's enjoyment was the grand singing of a funeral hymn in memory of Lord Aberdare by the vast throng of people. It was simply touching in the extreme.

To be understood and appreciated it is necessary to attend one of these big scale Eisteddfods. To describe it is impossible. E. M.

miniatures.

KING'S WEIGH HOUSE CHAPEL, DUKE STREET, W.

As most of our readers probably know, this "cause" is that of the Weigh House Chapel, so well known in connection with the ministry of the late Rev. Thomas Binney, D.D. The old chapel near the Monument being required as a site for the present Monument Station, a large portion of the sum realised by the sale was spent in erecting a magnificent church in Duke Street. It is altogether a beautiful building, fitted up and completed in the best style. A fine three-manual organ (at which Mr. A. J. Roberts presides) fills up one end of the chapel.

Visiting the chapel a few Sundays ago we were amazed to see such a poor congregation. The building will probably seat comfortably over 900 persons. There were present, on this occasion, thirty-five in the gallery, exclusive of the choir, and about fifty downstairs. Truly it was a most depressing spectacle. The minister, the Rev. A. Sandison, is a highly cultured man hailing from Shetland; but his very pronounced Scotch accent is difficult to understand. His prayer was so low, that we could only hear about half, and at least half of that again we could not follow owing to the brogue.

The choir consisted of about fifteen singers. From such a small constituency to draw upon, Mr. Roberts has no doubt had some difficulty in getting these together, and has evidently been compelled, in some instances at least, to be content with a low standard of ability. To lead the singing at all in such an empty chapel must be discouraging, so we must make allowances for some defects. We will only say, therefore, that their singing leaves room for a great deal of improvement. Mr. Roberts is probably unable to judge of the power of his instrument, for frequently he quite overpowered the congregation.

With such a beautiful chapel, a splendid organ, and everything arranged for the comfort of the congregation, why is the attendance so very poor? This is a question that concerns not only the authorities of the place, but the heads of London Congregationalism. To say that West-end people do not go to a place of worship, or that they go to High churches, is quite untrue. From the Weigh House, five minutes' walk took us to the Salvation Army Hall near Oxford Circus. Here is a dingy dull building, in which a very plain service was being conducted in the simplest possible manner, and yet the place was quite full. From here we went to the Polytechnic, where we were stopped at the door by an attendant who told us there was not even standing room, though on enquiry we found that the hall holds about 1,100 people. Here, then, are two unattractive places within a quarter of a mile of the Weigh House Chapel, both crowded to the doors, and yet that place which in itself is very bright, cheerful, and comfortable, is almost empty. What is the cause of it? Who is to blame for it? It is abundantly clear present methods don't answer; why are they not changed? Along Oxford Street we encountered thousands of persons wandering about; why is no attempt made to get them in? Some very radical changes will have to be made

before the Weigh House gets even a fair-sized congregation. We will make no suggestion outside our own sphere. We will only say, therefore, that we are convinced the musical service must be very much improved in every direction before people will be attracted by it. If the right kind of service, musical and otherwise, was provided, there is no reason whatever why the King's Weigh House Chapel should not be as full as any other place in the neighbourhood. Surely it is time the authorities took action in this matter.

WARWICK LANE WESLEYAN CHAPEL, COVENTRY.

Warwick Lane Chapel is one of the oldest religious institutions in Coventry, and though situated in a narrow back street, it maintains its reputation for vigorous active work. A short time ago a capacious schoolroom was added to the premises, which provide excellent accommodation for Sunday School purposes. The chapel has also been redecorated and made more attractive.

The music of the church has for some time suffered owing to the wretched organ. With characteristic pluck the congregation set to work to remedy this defect, and a few weeks ago a two-manual organ of fifteen stops, costing nearly £300, was placed in the church, and was opened almost if not entirely free from debt. The future prospects are now bright. In Mr. Charles Matthews the church possesses an efficient and sympathetic organist, and in Mr. Ward a choirmaster of considerable ability and tact. The choir (consisting of about thirty members) is an unusually good one. They sing with much spirit, refinement, and with good expression. Under the new conditions we have no doubt Warwick Lane congregation will exhibit plenty of real Methodist fire in their singing, and the place will gain a wider reputation for the excellency of its church music.

BURTON-ON-TRENT NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION.

THE members of the above Union gave their annual concert in the Town Hall, on the 13th ulto., in the presence of a large audience. The chief item in the programme was Gaul's cantata, *The Ten Virgins*. The chorus numbered about sixty voices. The soloists were Miss Rose Long (soprano), Miss Florence Bourne (contralto), Mr. J. T. Birch (tenor), and Mr. T. Horrex (baritone), all of Birmingham. Mr. John Frost ably conducted the performances, and Mr. Gaul presided at the organ, and also acted as accompanist in the second part of the programme. In the "Festal March" for organ and piano (which was heartily encored) Mr. Gaul was ably assisted by Messrs. Heughan and Windsor. The cantata was very favourably received by the audience, who heartily applauded the efforts of the principals and chorus. At the conclusion of the cantata Mr. Gaul, in a brief speech, complimented Mr. Frost and the choir for the excellent rendering they had given of his work. In Part II. the choir sang the part songs, "Strike the Lyre" and "Forth to the Meadows," and an excellent selection of songs and duets were given by the principals. Several encores were demanded, but owing to the length of the programme they could not be acceded to. Both financially and musically this was one of the most successful concerts the Union has given.

Reforms and Developments in our Public Worship.

BY REV. SAMUEL PEARSON.

(Continued from page 58.)

AND NOW I would respectfully offer some suggestions, in the spirit of what I have been trying to say, towards the reform and development of our public worship, and I ask you to receive them in the same spirit. To those who ask, "Do we need reform or development?" I would respectfully say, "Reforms have always been needed," and we, in other branches of life, have been the foremost to recognise this need and to strive for reform. No doubt it is needed in other ways. I have been asked to speak on public worship *only*, and therefore only deal with that. Surely our churches in this respect are not all they could be or ought to be. It is not for nothing that the phrase, "The slovenliness of dissent," has been heard, and I beseech the more conservative on these matters to remember and ponder the great Cardinal's words, "Change is the condition of growth." To stand still is to stagnate, and stagnation is death.

1st. *I would suggest a fuller use of the Psalms.*—Our forefathers preferred psalms to hymns. We have gone round, and some of our most rigid people sit down and take no part in the chanting of the Psalms, because they so much prefer hymns, and they say, "Chanting is either Popish or like what they do in the Church." What if it is? These Churches are not Mahomedan. They worship Christ, and it is very evident their worship is most acceptable to the masses of the people. (East London will prove this.) But for such people I have a strong case. I suppose they will be more than willing to do what the old Puritans did. *They used the Psalms constantly*, their very conversation was full of expressions from them; they went to war with them on their lips, and when they carried their greatest leader, John Hampden, to his grave, they chanted the 90th Psalm along the churchyard path. But there is a stronger reason. We live in an age when, I believe, *the Bible is read less than ever*. On the most charitable ground, we will say the cause is the busy, hurrying spirit of the times, and the fierce competition of commercial life. But whatever may be the reason, the want of time or the waste of time, the busy life or indifference, the fact remains. Is it not well, then, to sing in our churches on each Sunday several of these Psalms, so that the great truths with which they abound may be brought to mind and linger in the memory through the week amid other scenes and influences. I would suggest a regular going through the psalms in our Psalters, rather than the repetition of a few which happen to be favourites with the choir, organist, or minister. The Church, through its daily service, goes through all the one hundred and fifty Psalms every month. If it did nothing else by its services it would, through this one means, do a splendid work.

In the same way I would suggest a calendar of lessons of *one* at least for each service; it must read one from which the text is taken, kept by the minister, so as to bring about a fuller and more comprehensive

use of the Bible, so that each Sabbath four lessons and four Psalms would sound in the ears and hearts of the people—a fair amount, if carefully chosen for a whole year. It has always seemed strange to me that there could ever be in the mind of any thinking man any objection to the constant and regular use of the Psalms in public worship. That any man should wish to deny to our collective worship what we each find a priceless, spiritual boon in our individual and private communion with God. After the New Testament, or even after the Gospels, surely most of us turn instinctively to the Psalms for the nourishment of our spiritual life, and especially in any time of sorrow and distress. Why, then, should any wish to withhold this from our collective devotion. And even more strange when we remember that, whenever the book of Psalms was put together and completed, from that time until now religious men have found in them the deepest expression of their inward life; from that time until now there never has been a momentary pause when somewhere or other the praises and prayers of seekers after God have not been expressed in these words. From whatever point of view any Church may have contemplated the scheme of its doctrine, by whatever name they have thought good to designate themselves, and however bitterly opposed to each other in Church government or in the observance of rites, you find them all, by universal and harmonious consent, adopting the Psalms as the outward form by which they shall express the inward feelings of the religious life.

I am surely not saying too much in asserting that nothing like them, nothing in any way comparable to them, is to be found in the noblest and highest examples of any other religious language. We know what there was in the world besides; where can we look for their counterpart? The Psalms stand up like a pillar of fire and light in the religious history of the world. They lift us at once into an atmosphere of religious thought which is the highest that man has ever reached. They come with all the characteristic affections and emotions of humanity, everything that is deepest, tenderest, most pathetic, most aspiring, along with all the plain realities of man's condition and destiny, into the presence of the living God.

"Here you have prayers and aspirations for every time, and place, and circumstance, and person; for the bridal and the grave, for times of joy and sorrow, for the king and peasant, for the stricken sinner and the saint looking in at the gates of heaven, and all consecrated by the great hopes of saints, and by the voices of all good men, by the pure lives of saints and the tears of heart-broken penitence." Beware, you who wish to hinder their use, their regular use, in the house of God. Beware, you who wish to regulate men's worship by your ideas of what should be, or by what has been, in an ignorance of the religious history of the world's past life, beware, lest you cause your own life an unspeakable loss, but also, what is worse, rob others of untold blessings.

2nd. *A greater degree of fixity in our services.*—I am sure I do but express the feeling of many in saying it is no help to devotion to feel "at sea" as to what the order, and even complexion, of a service is going to be.

We have different men coming into the same pulpit, and we have the same men in different moods. (We little know the causes; the distractions and anxieties of a week's life must and do tell—some, it may be, from the too great demands of too exacting people—but the fact is inevitable.) We want something always in our service which shall lift our worship out of the reach of these drawbacks, so that, whatever the man and whatever the mood, these, at any rate, we can always enter into the same spirit. Ah, but, says some man, "Is not repetition so often fatal to feeling and sincerity?" Yes, it often is, but need it be so? or how is it you like *old* hymns and old tunes which you have sung hundreds of times, but which you say you never sing too often, and never sing without feeling better, and nearer heaven. The Lord's Prayer must, of course, be used in every service, and by its setting to some intonation or simple chant seemly order is preserved, and all are able to join in it. This, I rejoice to say, is being already done in many of our churches.

I would suggest the "Te Deum" for the Morning Service (not always to the same music by any means), the "Magnificat" and "Nunc Dimittis" in the evening. In the one, we have not only one of the oldest ascriptions of praise, but also a confession of faith; in the other, the "Magnificat," a hymn for the times in which we live. If there is anything by way of praise in the Bible which seems more than another suited to the democratic spirit of our age, it is this wondrously beautiful hymn of the mother of our Lord. By it, this woman, "blessed among women," is teaching in our Church life for ever, not with an usurpation of authority, but with a saintly quietness which knows no end, seeming at the same time to approve and to recognise woman's work in the world and in the Church, which is now making itself felt as never before, and destined to do so more and more. You will notice I emphasised the "Te Deum" not only as praise, but as a confession of faith. It was, believe me, by no means a gain when the Puritans in their services ceased to confess their faith. It seems to me as desirable to confess our faith as our want of faith. By not doing so, we lose sight of truths which need to be constantly remembered, which were the faith of the early Church, and which through the long ages have been strength and comfort to so many. And so I would go further, and even have the so-called Apostles' Creed repeated *once* a month as the earliest systematic expression of the Christian faith, and as still expressing it. "What," says some one, "of those men who cannot repeat it?" Let them be silent. Are we to surrender all to Agnostics; to let down our flag because of some who happen to worship with us? We do not make it a condition of coming to the Lord's Table, but we repeat it as *our* confession of faith in which our Church was built, and upon which our Christianity stands. Such a confession at any rate would tend towards *definiteness*, the want of which is one of the great needs of our day. After the age of destructiveness through which we have passed, in which men have eagerly been telling us what they do *not* believe, men are now asking eagerly, anxiously out of hearts empty and aching, What *do* you believe? What am I to believe? And the answer

should ring through our services: "This, which men believed in the beginning, through ages, and which we still believe with all our souls."

There can be no doubt the definite Church is the winning Church to-day. Men are weary of negatives and quicksands; they want a *rock*, a resting place—"the rock which is higher than we." We want definiteness, and a confession of faith must lead to such. Its advantages would far outweigh any disadvantages which are often but the outcome of prejudice or indifference. Believe me, in these days when so many men seem to have *no* beliefs at all, *no* intensely real convictions, but are only too often "religious nothingarians," I am fast coming to think it is better to hold some few definite beliefs and to emphasise them, better even to be making the most of some imperfect creed than to pass through life with a feeble and indefinite interest in all beliefs, but a definite devotion to none, "sitting apart, holding no form of creed, but contemplating all." To this idea of fixity in the service, I would also add the summary of the Commandments as given by Jesus, or the Ten Commandments, and also the Beatitudes, with suitable responses.

(To be continued.)

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 20th of the month.)

METROPOLITAN.

BERMONDSEY.—Good Friday at Rouel Road Congregational Church was celebrated by a lantern service and sacred concert. The views embraced scenes illustrating the Life of our Lord and the Passion, which were graphically described by the pastor, the Rev. W. Daniel. The area of the spacious building was well filled by a reverent and appreciative audience. The choir were in strong force, and aided by cornet and violins, contributed musical selections—solos, quartette, choruses. Solos were rendered by Miss Fordham, Miss Murray, Mr. Julier, and Mr. Welsh. The choir rendered several choruses in good style. Mr. Jas. Brummitt presided at the organ, and Mr. A. G. Geale conducted.

Bow.—A successful rendering of Stainer's *Crucifixion* was given in Harley Street Chapel on Wednesday, 10th April, by the choir, which was augmented for the occasion, and numbered about fifty voices. The principal solos were undertaken by Mr. Hicks (tenor), of Dr. Stephenson's "Childrens' Home" Choir, and Mr. H. W. Braine (bass) of Stratford. The choruses were most creditably sung, and gave evidence of the careful training of the organist and choirmaster, Mr. E. A. King, who presided at the organ, and accompanied most judiciously both solos and choruses. There was a large congregation.

FOREST GATE.—A good performance of the *Messiah* was given in the Congregational Church on Good Friday evening under the able direction of Mr. J. B. Mellis. The soloists were Madame Kate Nicholls, Miss Jessie Browning, Mr. Herbert Clinch, and Mr. J. H. Macfarlane.—The Ilford Vocal Union and Orchestral Society gave an excellent performance of *The Messiah* in the Wesleyan Church, Forest Gate, on Good Friday evening. The principals were: Miss Amy B. Devonshire, L.R.A.M., Miss Bessie Dore, Mr. Henry

Slaughter, and Mr. C. F. Wood. The singing of Miss Devonshire, Miss Dore, and Mr. Wood was particularly good and artistic, and Mr. Slaughter effectively sustained the tenor solos. The chorus fully maintained its reputation for excellent choral singing. There was a large audience. Conductor, Mr. A. Storr, L.T.C.L.

GOSPEL OAK.—A sale of work was held in connection with the Congregational Church on April 3rd and 4th, in aid of the new organ fund. The first day Mrs. Joseph Parker opened the proceedings, and the second day Dr. Horton. The cost of the organ was £470. Structural alterations, choir platform, and seats, etc., raised the total to nearly £550. The balance remaining to be met this year was £180, and this, it is hoped, will be nearly all cleared off by this effort, so that the whole will have been paid in but little over one year, the organ having been opened in February, 1894. During the sale organ recitals were given by Mr. Drewett, A.R.C.O. (Hare Court), Mr. J. R. Griffiths (Christ Church, Westminster), Miss Pusey (St. Martin's, Haverstock Hill), and Mr. C. Darnton (Gospel Oak Church).

NORTH BOW.—On the 26th March a performance of *Messiah* was given in the Congregational Church by a choir and band conducted by Mr. Richard Tucker, of Bow Baptist Chapel. The soloists were Mrs. Rose Morgan (soprano), Miss Alice Bausor (contralto), both of Hackney; Mr. Walter Sime (tenor), of Stratford, and Mr. Bunker (bass), of Greenwich. There was a good attendance, and the choruses, etc., were most creditably sung, the concert being very successful.

WALTHAMSTOW.—On the evening of Good Friday a choral service was held at Trinity Congregational Church, the chief feature being a meditation on *The Crucifixion*. The choir, thanks to the painstaking and judicious training of Mr. E. S. Goodes, the organist and choirmaster, enjoys a reputation for good singing, and this reputation was well sustained by the admirable rendering of the service. Mr. Goodes was at the organ, and the devout feeling with which the chorus parts of the meditation were rendered was creditable alike to the choir and the conductor. The appropriate hymns with which the service was interspersed were heartily joined in by the congregation. The tenor recitatives and solos were excellently sung by Mr. H. G. Goodes. The bass solos in the earlier part of the service were well sung by Mr. W. Allen, and in the latter part the bass solos were rendered by Mr. Barrett, Mr. J. B. Goodes, and Mr. Kaffe. In the beautiful quartette "God so loved the world," Mr. H. G. Goodes and Mr. Allen were associated with Miss Martin and Miss Edla Kuhn, and it was finely interpreted, the chorus being taken up with power. The duet "So Thou liftest Thy Divine petition," was well rendered by Mr. Goodes and Mr. Barrett. During the service the Rev. R. Denness Cooper gave an earnest address.

PROVINCIAL.

BESSES, NEAR MANCHESTER.—On Palm Sunday the Lenten season was observed at the Congregational Church by the somewhat unusual feature of two specially arranged services. The first service was held in the church at 2.30, the music being sustained entirely by the scholars and teachers, for which they had been specially rehearsed. The Introit was, "Cast thy burden" (Mendelssohn), and the following hymns were sung, interspersed by appropriate readings from the Gospels:—"Man of Sorrows and acquainted with our griefs" (tune *Chamounix*), "O come and look awhile on Him" (tune *St. Cross*, Dykes), and "Behold the Lamb of God," to a tune by Dykes. Simper's setting of "The Story of the Cross" was also given, with close attention to light and shade. The service concluded

with the Vesper, "Lord, keep us safe" (I. Stribling), sung after the benediction. The evening service, although there was no departure from the usual order, was of a deeply impressive character. The Introit was "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me," by Sir George J. Elvey. Hymns, etc., of appropriate character were heartily sung by the congregation. The anthem selected for this occasion was "And it was the third hour," also by Sir George J. Elvey, a composition—written in a grave and dignified style—containing some descriptive passages altogether admirably suited for such a service. After the benediction was pronounced, Stainer's "Seven-fold Amen" was sung. Mr. Leaver, the organist and choir-master, presided at the organ.

BOURNEMOUTH.—A sacred concert was given on the evening of Good Friday, in the Richmond Hill Congregational Church, in aid of the church building debt fund. There was a large audience, and the concert was of a character appropriate to the occasion. The vocalists were Mrs. George King (soprano), and Master W. A. Gough (boy soprano, of London); Mr. Charles Fletcher supplied two or three violin solos, and the organist was Mr. B. Greek Stoneman, who besides playing several organ solos, had trained an excellent choir for the chorus parts.—A sacred concert was held in the Lansdowne Baptist Church on Good Friday evening, when there was a large audience. The chapel choir was considerably augmented, and there was an efficient orchestra (with Miss Pardy at the piano), which added very much to the success of the concert. Owing to a serious illness, the choir-master, Mr. J. J. Brazier, was unable to be present, and his place as conductor was taken by Mr. Perman, the organist of the church, while Mr. G. Holder (a former organist), presided at the American organ used for the occasion. One of the most noteworthy items of the programme was the cornet solo by Mr. Cussans, "The Lost Chord," with orchestral accompaniment, which was warmly re-demanded. Miss Kate Wells, Mrs. Holder, Mr. Horsey, and Mr. Newman were very efficient vocalists. Towards the close of the evening the Rev. W. C. Minifie (pastor), said a few words, expressing regret at the absence of Mr. Brazier, and heartily thanking those who had taken part in the concert, especially those who had come to help from other places.

CARDIFF.—On Thursday, March 28th, the Charles Street Wesleyan Choir gave a sacred concert in Roath Road Wesleyan Schoolroom in aid of the Cardiff Blind Institute. Marcus Green, Esq., presided, and there was a fair audience, although the programme was worth a very much larger attendance. A collection was taken during the evening on behalf of the Institute, and to help to provide the blind men with musical instruments of various kinds. Several ladies and gentlemen are interesting themselves in the movement, which promises to be successful. The choir rendered the various anthems, etc., in excellent style. Solos were ably rendered by Misses Morrish, Pedler, and Messrs. A. Jenkins, B. S. Ching, and J. Russ.—On Sunday, the 21st ult., the Foreign Missionary anniversary in connection with Wesley Chapel, Charles Street, Cardiff, was held in the Park Hall (in consequence of the chapel having been burnt down on Good Friday). Rev. F. W. Macdonald preached two eloquent and thoughtful sermons to large congregations. The choir (a well-balanced one of thirty voices) occupied the orchestra, and during the offertory in the morning, gave the anthem, "O Lord, our Governor," by Hy. Gadsby; and in the evening Rev. H. H. Woodward's "The radiant morn hath passed away." These pieces were rendered in a very tasteful manner. Mr. Deys (the chapel organist) presided at the organ.

CHELMSFORD.—Mr. F. E. Swan, A.R.C.M., the organ-

ist of the Congregational Church, gave an organ recital in the church on the 5th ult. before a large audience. The programme included selections from the works of Bach, Salomé, Mendelssohn, Dubois, Turpin. Vocal solos were ably rendered by Master Leonard Griffiths and Mr. S. W. Ashley.

CHELTHENHAM.—An organ recital was given in Highbury Congregational Church on the 16th ult., the players being Mr. A. G. Bloodworth, the organist of the church, and Mr. G. H. Fox. Their pieces were selected from the works of Widor, Mendelssohn, Wely, Wagner, Mozart, and Guilman. Mr. C. Johnson sang "Nazareth," and Miss E. Street played a harp solo.—The Congregational Church was filled on Good Friday to hear a performance of Gaul's *Passion Music*, and it is not too much to say that the high anticipations raised by the reports of the musical critics and press on the work were fully realised. The *Passion* is divided into six scenes: (1) The Traitor at the Table; (2) The Denial at the Palace; (3) The Unjust Condemnation; (4) The Mockery on Calvary; (5) The Shadow of Death; and (6) The Holy Sepulchre, and is eminently characteristic of the best of our great English composer's work. The rendering was an excellent one, and the choruses exhibited every evidence of careful and earnest preparation, the attack being good, and the delicate effects of light and shade well brought out. Special mention might be made of the "Crucify Him" chorus, the march and chorus of Roman soldiers, "Hail, King of the Jews," and the difficult but beautiful setting of Proctor's well-known hymn "Why shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel Death." The solos were effectively sung by Master Ayres, Mrs. A. G. Bloodworth, Mr. Talintyre, Mr. Bond, and Mr. W. Martyn, who undertook the music allotted to the part of Jesus Christ. The two quartettes were very well sung. Mr. G. H. Fox, organist of Trent College, Nottingham, presided at the organ, and the organist of the church, Mr. A. G. Bloodworth, conducted the work.

COVENTRY.—A new two-manual organ has been erected in Warwick Lane Wesleyan Chapel. On March 28th a short dedicatory service was held, after which Mr. Holloway gave a recital. Special services were held on Sunday, March 30th, when Mr. Minshall presided at the organ. The choir, under the direction of Mr. Ward, sang special anthems in excellent style. In the afternoon Mr. Minshall gave a recital, when vocal items were rendered by Mrs. Adams and Mr. Smart. There were large congregations, especially at the evening service, when the chapel was uncomfortably crowded. On Monday, April 1st, Mr. Minshall lectured on "Worship Music," the Mayor presiding. A capital choir selected from various chapels in the town gave the illustrations in a very pleasing manner.

FROME.—The *Creation* was rendered on Good Friday evening at Wesley Chapel, under the auspices of the organist (Mr. T. Grant), choir, and other officials connected with that place of worship. The chorus numbered about eighty voices, and the orchestra included nearly thirty performers. Mr. A. W. R. Cole, of Merton College, Oxford, presided at the organ with great ability, and Mr. T. Grant conducted in his usually efficient manner. The soloists were Miss Annie Lee; Mr. E. T. Morgan, principal tenor Bristol Cathedral; and Mr. D. Harrison, principal bass Lichfield Cathedral. Miss Lee's singing charmed every one present. Her rich, full voice, great range of compass, and clear enunciation of the words, added greatly to the charm of her performance, and elicited frequent applause. Mr. Morgan was heard to good effect in the whole of his solos. Mr. Harrison also satisfactorily discharged his allotted task. The choruses were rendered with excellent precision, and with strict attention to expression.

HUNTINGDON.—Mr. F. Clark, with his excellent choir, produced Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise*, at Trinity Church, on the 17th ult. This was in some respects the most difficult work ever attempted by the choir, and the excellent manner in which it was rendered was the highest possible testimony to the splendid training they had received. Mr. Tebbs, of Trinity College, sang the tenor solos. Miss Gill, who undertook the soprano music at very short notice, was suffering from cold, and had time for but one rehearsal, but she sang all her parts in a manner which left nothing to be desired. The feature of the performance was the admirable choral singing. The attack was in every way praiseworthy, and the whole work was rendered with a precision which showed a thorough knowledge of the music. Mr. Frank Clark conducted, and Mr. Claude Hunter, F.C.O., A.R.C.M., very kindly officiated as organist, and in addition played grandly as an opening voluntary Mendelssohn's sixth sonata.

KELVEDON.—Guest's sacred cantata, *The Captive Maid of Israel*, was given in the Congregational Church, on April 3rd, by the choir, assisted by friends, numbering in all fifty performers. The choruses were sung in good style, and with great taste, under the direction of the respected choirmaster, Mr. W. H. Jennings; and the various solos were effectively rendered by Miss Nellie Bridge, Miss Nellie Crowe, Miss Edith Smith, Mrs. Albert Smith, Mr. W. R. Newman, and Mr. William Deal. The accompaniments were played by Miss Olive (piano) and Mr. Alfred Orst (organ). Selections from the same work were given on the following Sunday evening before a large congregation.

LIVERPOOL.—At the Centenary Festival of the London Missionary Society, held in Liverpool last month, special music was well rendered. Old "Calcutta" was sung with much enthusiasm by the crowded audience. Mr. J. H. Maunders' centenary anthem, composed at the request of the Committee, received worthy treatment at the hands of the special choir of some two hundred voices, who had been rehearsed with much care and energy by Mr. G. P. Stubbs. Another effective item was Mr. Josiah Booth's beautiful setting of the well-known hymn "The ninety and nine." This was well sung by Mr. Alexander Tucker.

NEWMARKET.—The usual sacred concert was given in the Congregational Church on Good Friday evening, under the direction of Mr. H. Hambling, who has recently been appointed choirmaster in the place of Mr. Sherborn, who has resigned. The choir sang three choruses in capital style. The soloists were, Miss Amy Sargent, Miss Lucie Johnstone, Mr. E. H. Hammond, Mr. H. Wilkins, and Mr. E. Searle, all of whom were loudly applauded by the large audience. Mr. Minshall, besides playing several solos, accompanied throughout the evening.

TEDDINGTON.—A three-manual organ, recently erected in the Baptist Chapel, was opened on the 17th ult., by Mr. Minshall, who gave a recital in the presence of a large and enthusiastic audience. The soloists were Miss Marion V. E. Perrott (soprano), Miss Clara Spencer (contralto), Mr. S. Masters (tenor), and Mr. Alexander Tucker (bass). So much did their singing please the listeners, that encores were the order of the evening. Master E. Deayton played two violin solos in excellent style, and the choir gave a good rendering of "Break forth into Joy" (Barnby) and "A Psalm of Life" (Kinross).

TROWBRIDGE.—The seating accommodation at the Tabernacle was taxed to its utmost extent on Good Friday evening, the occasion being of a two-fold character, viz., the rendering by the choir of Stainer's meditation, *The Crucifixion*, and also of the commencement of the pastorate of Mr. A. J. Pearse, M.A. The choir,

which had been trained by Mr. W. N. Haden, was strengthened by the addition of several friends, the professional soloists being Mr. Trefelyn David (tenor), and Mr. Montague Worlock (bass). The choruses were nicely rendered. The tenor soloist, Mr. David, sang the pieces allotted to him with taste and expression. Mr. Montague Worlock maintained the reputation he has earned by his interpretation of the difficult bass recitatives, while the duet with Mr. David, "So Thou livest Thy Divine petition," was excellently given. The accompaniments on the organ were ably played by Mr. A. R. Millington. During an interval in the service, Mr. A. J. Pearse, M.A., preached a short sermon, taking as his text, "God so loved the world." Speaking in his new relationship as their pastor, he said it was a happy augury for the future that they should have met that evening, as it were, in the shadow of the cross of Christ.

Reviews.

Psalms for Chanting. Edited by F. G. Edwards. Publishing Office of the Presbyterian Church of England, 14, Paternoster Square, E.C.—This work has been carefully prepared by Mr. Edwards for use in the Presbyterian Churches. Most chant books contain passages of scripture other than the Psalms, but here we have some of the Psalms only. The pointing generally is such as will be helpful to good chanting. In some cases, however, we observe the accent is placed on an unimportant word; for instance, in Psalm 24, verse 1,

The Earth is the Lord's, and the | fulness, there | of.

And in Psalm 89, verse 1,

I will sing of the mercies of the | Lord for | ever.

In the first instance, it seems to us the accent would be better on "Lord's," and in the second on "mercies." The chants selected are chiefly old favourites, though a few have been specially written for the work.

The Orchestra at a Glance. By E. A. Lodge. (Lion Arcade, Huddersfield.) 1s.—This is a chart arranged in score showing the pitch compass and capabilities of all orchestral instruments. Students especially will find it very useful. The weak points and impossibilities in each instrument are given. The information is truly *multum-in-parvo*.

I was glad when they said unto me. Anthem by Frank Roebuck. Horsfall and Bailey, Huddersfield. 4d.—This is an anthem by the Organist and Choirmaster of Mold Green Congregational Church. It is melodious and contains considerable variety, comprising as it does a chorus, bass solo, quartette, soprano solo, and final chorus.

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in F. By O. D. Belsham. (Weekes and Co., 14, Hanover Street, W.) 4d.—A very effective setting. The alternation of harmony and unison in the various parts is striking.

To Correspondents.

A. M.: In "The Bristol"

T. B. C.: We do not know it.

Y. Z.: (1) 1856. (2) Common time certainly. (3) Consecutive fifths.

J. B. O.: You can procure it through any music seller.

The following are thanked for their communications:—T. B. (Dover); E. J. S. (Shrewsbury); W. L. (Barnsley); A. M. T. (Cardiff); J. J. P. (Rochester); W. W. (Boston); N. R. (Stroud); P. B. (Winchester).

Correspondence.

STORIES OF ORGAN BLOWERS

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—In response to Mr. Cuthbert Hadden's suggestion in your April issue, I send the following true stories of organ blowers:—

(1) A costermonger blower, who worked with me (as he would have put it), requiring a deputy, interviewed a neighbouring crossing sweeper, whose lungs, it appears, were weak. On enquiring the result of the application my blower said, "E says it's jest wot 'e ain't got." "Just what he ain't got!" said I; "what hasn't he got?" "Vy, the *vind*," was the startling reply.

(2) A young fellow who considered himself rather a swell, acted as blower for me when practising for some time, and was paid by the quarter. He made out a bill headed thus (names of course fictitious),

Mr. Thompson,

To Mr. James Johnson,
Assistant Organist (!)

(3) An older man, who prided himself on having been member of a chapel choir in his younger days, and "knowing all the tunes in the 'Bristol,'" always took a copy of the choir list, and provided himself with a hymn and tune book, which he managed to fix up so that he could see them while blowing. He said he could not blow properly unless he knew the music being played, and seemed to think it quite as necessary for the blower to have his tune book as the organist. He was quite lost without his book. This was a very advanced blower! I don't know how he managed with new anthems, etc., when he couldn't get a copy, but somehow I never observed any difficulty in the blowing on that account.—I am, yours truly,

DELTA.

Staccato Notes.

DR. HUBERT PARRY was presented to the Prince of Wales at the *Levee* on the 3rd ult.

THE "Beethoven Gold Medal" was presented to Madame Patti at the Philharmonic Concert on the 3rd ult., in recognition of the distinguished service she has rendered to the art of music.

SIGNOR FOLI has gone to the States for a holiday.

MADAME ALBANI proposes to take an American tour next autumn.

HERR EDWARD STRAUSS and his celebrated band will shortly visit London again.

SIR CHARLES and LADY HALLE propose going to the Cape in July.

MR. CHRISTOPHER WILSON has won the Mendelssohn Scholarship.

A PROPOSAL is made to hold a musical festival at Plymouth next autumn.

MISS ELIZABETH STIRLING, the distinguished lady organist, died on the 2nd ult. She passed the examination for the degree of Mus. Doc. Oxon.

MR. SANTLEY is about to enter the ranks of singing teachers. During the summer he will have leisure to take a certain number of pupils, who, if they turn out as well as Mr. Santley, will have cause to congratulate themselves.

MR. F. G. EDWARDS contributed an interesting article on "Mendelssohn's Organ Preludes and Fugues" to *Musical News* of the 20th ult.

THE Borough of West Ham Choral Society gave a successful sacred concert on Good Friday under the conductorship of Mr. W. Harding Bonner.

THE committee of the Welsh National Eisteddfod of 1896 have commissioned Dr. Joseph Parry to write a

new National Cantata, entitled *Cambria* to be performed at one of the evening concerts, under the baton of the composer.

MR. WILLIAM EBSWORTH HILL, who recently died at the age of 76, was a member of the famous violin makers of Bond Street, and was a famous expert in old violins.

MADAME ALBANI has undertaken to sing the chief soprano part in Mr. F. H. Cowen's *Harold* when that opera is performed at Covent Garden.

At the Guildhall School of Music Sir Joseph Barnby recently received a presentation from about 900 of the students, as an expression of their sympathy for him in his recent severe illness, and of their congratulations on his recovery.

Accidentals.

THE DÉBUTANTE (aside). "How many verses shall I sing?"

The Professor. "Do you want an encore?"

The Débutante. "Of course."

The Professor. "One."

TIMMINS. "Can your daughter play the piano?"

Robbins (wearily). "I don't know whether she can or not, but she does."

"Did your piano receive a medal at the World's Fair?"

"No, madam; ours is the only one that did not."

"Well, I think I will buy one, if that is really true."

"We give a written guarantee to the fact, madam."

AGENT. "Can I supply you with a piano, organ, harmonium, or a musical instrument of any kind?"

Crusty old Spinster. "No, sir; I hear plenty of that noise from next door. Miss Flighty has bought a new organ."

Agent. "Ah, indeed! Do you know how many stops it has got?"

C. O. S. "Yes; four—breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper."

At the close of a grand ball a celebrated actor of the Court Theatre, in Berlin, stands in the passage waiting for some friends. A beautiful and fashionably dressed lady approaches him, and says:

"Beg pardon, have I the honour to see before me our famous Herr Bruller, whose powerful and sonorous voice I had the pleasure of admiring last night in 'Macbeth'? Might I ask you to do me a little favour?"

"I am quite at your service, madam."

"Then will you be good enough to call out in the street for the carriage of Baroness Zabelitz?"

EDITORS have to put up with all manner of taunts and insults. Not long ago, at a social gathering, a Dallas lady said to a young man who is connected with a local paper:—

"You ought to belong to a church choir."

"But I can't sing. What put the idea of my belonging to a choir into your head?"

"Oh, nothing, except that I was reading the other day that a San Francisco church proposes to introduce harp music into the choir; and there is not much difference, you know, between a harp and a lyre, so I thought I'd just make the suggestion."

A LITTLE miss was listening to her sister while she was playing upon the piano, and after keeping still for a while, said,—

"Sister, why don't you open the draft and make it sound louder?"



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Fifth Edition, 1½d.
- No. 4. "Brightly Gleams our Banner."
Third Edition, 2d.
- No. 5. "Stand up, stand up for Jesus." 2d.
- No. 6. "I heard the Voice of Jesus say."
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By ARTHUR BERRIDGE. Price 1½d.
- No. 3. "HOLDEST! BREATHE AN EVENING BLESSING."
By FRANK MAITLAND. Price 1½d.
- No. 4. "ROCK OF AGES."
By CHAS. BUXTON GRUNDY. Price 1½d.
- No. 5. "O BE JOYFUL IN GOD."
By W. HENRY MAXFIELD, Mus. Bac. Price 1½d.
- No. 6. "FEAR NOT, O LAND." (Prize Harvest Anthem.)
By ARTHUR BERRIDGE. Price 1½d.
- No. 7. "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY."
By W. WRIGHT. Price 1½d.
- No. 8. "THERE WERE SHEPHERDS." (Prize Christmas Anthem.)
By W. WRIGHT. Price 1½d.
- No. 9. "HE IS RISEN." (Prize Easter Anthem.)
By J. P. ATTWATER. Price 1½d.
- No. 10. "O LORD, I WILL PRAISE THEE." (Prize Anthem.)
By ORLANDO A. MANSFIELD, Mus. Doc. Price 1½d.
- No. 11. "BECAUSE THE LORD THY GOD." (Prize Harvest Anthem.)
By W. HENRY MAXFIELD, Mus. Bac. Price 1½d.
- No. 12. "ALL HAIL THE POWER OF JESU'S NAME."
(Prize Anthem.)
By ERNEST H. SMITH, F.R.C.O. Price 1½d.
- No. 13. BENEDICITE OMNIA OPERA. (Prize Setting.)
By GEORGE H. ELY, B.A. Price 1½d.
- No. 14. LET US NOW GO EVEN UNTO BETHLEHEM
(Christmas Anthem.)
By BRUCE STEANE. Price 1½d.
- No. 15. "CHRIST IS RISEN." (Prize Easter Anthem.)
By JAMES LYON. Price 1½d.
- No. 16. SAVIOUR, BLESSED SAVIOUR. (Prize Choral March.)
By ERNEST H. SMITH, F.R.C.O. Price 2d.

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To Mr. James Johnson,
Assistant Organist (!)

(3) An older man, who prided himself on having been member of a chapel choir in his younger days, and "knowing all the tunes in the 'Bristol,'" always took a copy of the choir list, and provided himself with a hymn and tune book, which he managed to fix up so that he could see them while blowing. He said he could not blow properly unless he knew the music being played, and seemed to think it quite as necessary for the blower to have his tune book as the organist. He was quite lost without his book. This was a very advanced blower! I don't know how he managed with new anthems, etc., when he couldn't get a copy, but somehow I never observed any difficulty in the blowing on that account.—I am, yours truly,

DELTA.

Staccato Notes.

DR. HUBERT PARRY was presented to the Prince of Wales at the *Levee* on the 3rd ult.

THE "Beethoven Gold Medal" was presented to Madame Patti at the Philharmonic Concert on the 3rd ult., in recognition of the distinguished service she has rendered to the art of music.

SIGNOR FOLI has gone to the States for a holiday.

MADAME ALBANI proposes to take an American tour next autumn.

HERR EDWARD STRAUSS and his celebrated band will shortly visit London again.

SIR CHARLES and LADY HALLE propose going to the Cape in July.

MR. CHRISTOPHER WILSON has won the Mendelssohn Scholarship.

A PROPOSAL is made to hold a musical festival at Plymouth next autumn.

MISS ELIZABETH STIRLING, the distinguished lady organist, died on the 2nd ult. She passed the examination for the degree of Mus. Doc. Oxon.

MR. SANTLEY is about to enter the ranks of singing teachers. During the summer he will have leisure to take a certain number of pupils, who, if they turn out as well as Mr. Santley, will have cause to congratulate themselves.

MR. F. G. EDWARDS contributed an interesting article on "Mendelssohn's Organ Preludes and Fugues" to *Musical News* of the 20th ult.

THE Borough of West Ham Choral Society gave a successful sacred concert on Good Friday under the conductorship of Mr. W. Harding Bonner.

THE committee of the Welsh National Eisteddfod of 1896 have commissioned Dr. Joseph Parry to write a

new National Cantata, entitled *Cambria* to be performed at one of the evening concerts, under the baton of the composer.

MR. WILLIAM EBSWORTH HILL, who recently died at the age of 76, was a member of the famous violin makers of Bond Street, and was a famous expert in old violins.

MADAME ALBANI has undertaken to sing the chief soprano part in Mr. F. H. Cowen's *Harold* when that opera is performed at Covent Garden.

At the Guildhall School of Music Sir Joseph Barnby recently received a presentation from about 900 of the students, as an expression of their sympathy for him in his recent severe illness, and of their congratulations on his recovery.

Accidentals.

THE DÉBUTANTE (aside). "How many verses shall I sing?"

The Professor. "Do you want an encore?"

The Débutante. "Of course."

The Professor. "One."

TIMMINS. "Can your daughter play the piano?"

Robbins (wearily). "I don't know whether she can or not, but she does."

"DID your piano receive a medal at the World's Fair?"

"No, madam; ours is the only one that did not."

"Well, I think I will buy one, if that is really true."

"We give a written guarantee to the fact, madam."

AGENT. "Can I supply you with a piano, organ, harmonium, or a musical instrument of any kind?"

Crusty old Spinster. "No, sir; I hear plenty of that noise from next door. Miss Flighty has bought a new organ."

Agent. "Ah, indeed! Do you know how many stops it has got?"

C. O. S. "Yes; four—breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper."

At the close of a grand ball a celebrated actor of the Court Theatre, in Berlin, stands in the passage waiting for some friends. A beautiful and fashionably dressed lady approaches him, and says:

"Beg pardon, have I the honour to see before me our famous Herr Bruller, whose powerful and sonorous voice I had the pleasure of admiring last night in 'Macbeth'? Might I ask you to do me a little favour?"

"I am quite at your service, madam."

"Then will you be good enough to call out in the street for the carriage of Baroness Zabelitz?"

EDITORS have to put up with all manner of taunts and insults. Not long ago, at a social gathering, a Dallas lady said to a young man who is connected with a local paper:—

"You ought to belong to a church choir."

"But I can't sing. What put the idea of my belonging to a choir into your head?"

"Oh, nothing, except that I was reading the other day that a San Francisco church proposes to introduce harp music into the choir; and there is not much difference, you know, between a harp and a lyre, so I thought I'd just make the suggestion."

A LITTLE miss was listening to her sister while she was playing upon the piano, and after keeping still for a while, said,—

"Sister, why don't you open the draft and make it sound louder?"



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